

# Columbia River Gillnetter

COLUMBIA RIVER FISHERMEN'S PROTECTIVE UNION

Fall / Winter 1994 / Vol. 25, No. 2



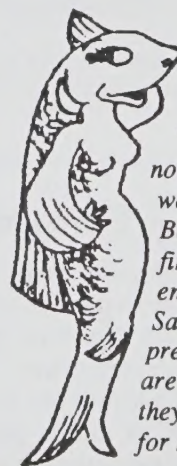
## Help has arrived: Local fishermen getting disaster benefits

A disaster relief declaration signed by President Clinton has brought some much-needed financial help to many Northwest commercial fishermen who have been hit hard by the declining salmon runs.

"We never thought the money would get to us," said one southwest Washington family now receiving checks. "It's really been a welcome help for us."

The Oregon state Employment Department estimates that about 2,000 salmon fishermen in eight Oregon counties bordering the Pacific Ocean and five coastal Washington counties were eligible for the federal aid. The minimum weekly benefit fishermen can receive is \$66, the maximum \$285, based on their most

*Please turn to page 5*



## Sally the Salmon Says...

"Old Herschel's in trouble now! They're going to be watching for him at the Ballard Locks, as they've finally put some teeth in the endangered species act. Salmon and steelhead predators like Herschel now are facing the death penalty if they don't curb their appetite for me!"



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*The word is "retroactive" on Bristol Bay this year as high demand, less fish push prices up*

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*Fights over fish: Washington sportfishermen want to make coho and chinook gamefish*

**On the cover:** *An early snapshot of Astoria's Samuel Elmore salmon cannery, shown before the expansion. (Photo courtesy Compleat Photographer.)*



# Columbia River Gillnetter

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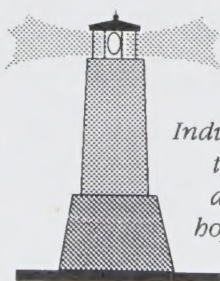
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## FOREWORD

*The Columbia River Gillnetter is the pilot of the Lower Columbia River Commercial Fishing Industry, keeping fishermen and the public in touch with today's important issues. The advertisements which appear make it possible to publish this paper, and we hope you will, in return, patronize and thank the people who support our livelihood.*





## DISASTER RELIEF: *Too little, too late?*

**1994** On August 2, the federal government announced that help in the form of a \$12 million aid package was on the way for hurting salmon fishermen in coastal communities in Oregon, Washington and California.

For many fishermen and their families it was a welcome announcement, but some saw it as too little, too late.

"The administration has failed us," said former Washington state Rep. Jolene Unsoeld, a strong backer of commercial fishermen throughout her term.

"They've failed the fishermen, and they've failed the fishing communities. The federal government dropped the ball and real people are going to get hurt. I'm furious that they aren't providing the help they should be," she said.

As of October 29, some 422 applications had been approved under the relief program, while 129 were denied. More than \$1 million in benefits has already been paid directly to fishermen.

November 15 was the filing deadline for fishermen, with a maximum of twenty-six weeks of payable benefits retroactive to July 15, 1994 for gillnetters and May 1 for ocean trollers.

On another note, we are quickly learning that smolt barging around dams is clearly *not* the answer to saving salmon and it must stop. In July, more than 100,000 young fall chinook waiting to be barged downriver in eastern Oregon were

**"The administration failed us.  
I'm furious that they aren't providing  
the help they should be. The federal  
government dropped the ball."**

killed when water in the McNary Dam collection system became too hot for the tiny fish to handle. The still water turns the reservoirs into giant hot tubs, and fish don't like it when there's no current.

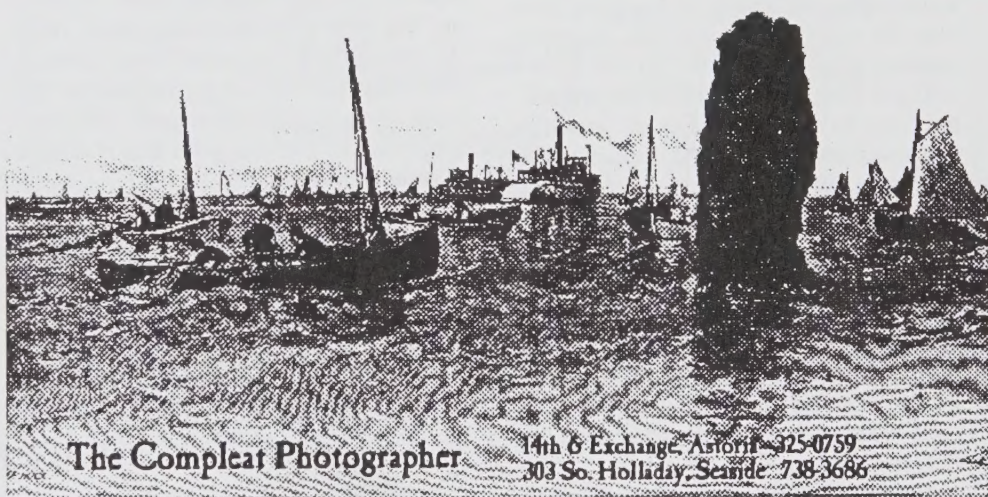
What we need to do is to try to get back to a natural river flow, the way it was before the dams, or a comparable drawdown of lower Snake River reservoirs. We also must look at operating several hydroelectric projects such as the John Day, McNary and Wanapum at near crest levels if we hope to have a chance in hell at restoring fish runs.

What has happened is smolts have lost their instinctual imprint of the river that mother nature has given them, because their natural paths are blocked by giant pads of concrete. All they can do is literally pound their heads against the wall.

*Meanwhile*, the Youngs Bay fishery continues to be the only game in town. This year, ODF&W expected a total run of only about 16,000 coho, but ended up with egg on their face as some 18,000 were landed during just the first 24 hours of the fishery. Gillnetters could see the silvers jumping and finning as they laid out their nets the first day.

Both Klaskanine and Big Creek hatchery goals were attained for the year, while several hundred thousand much-needed dollars were pumped into the local economy.

—Don Riswick



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## FROM THE SECRETARY

There has been commercial fishing on the Columbia River since the 1860s, and throughout those years there have been good years and bad years, like any other industry.

But now, in 1994, we will most likely have the lowest production of all time.

On May 1, 1994, our area was declared a disaster area because of the low amount of fish runs and the lack of fishing on the Columbia River. The years 1992 and '93 were also poor, and should have been declared disasters, but this was not done until ocean sport and commercial fishing was closed in 1994.

Harvest on the river has dropped to under one million pounds the last two years from the peak production years of the early 1900s of over 40 million pounds.

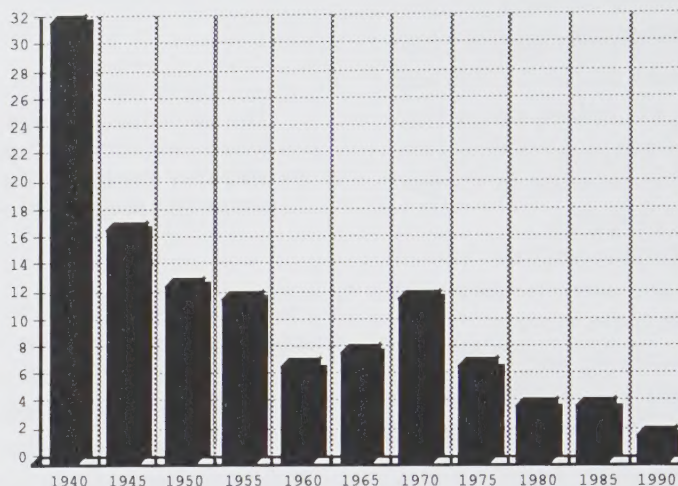
Nature is responsible for part of the damage to the fishery, but only a small part. Man has turned a once wild river into a number of slow-moving pools of warm water, and very little has been done over the years to help the fish, except to continue to put a lid on the harvest.

If you take time to look at the records, or, even better, at a graph of what has happened over the years, it is plain to see how barriers have been built restricting fish from getting back to their normal spawning areas in order to bring back future runs.

Looking at other users of the water system, they have not done their part to protect fisheries. Water for power, navigation, farming and recreation has been used without responsibly protecting the fisheries.

Now the "endangered species" listing has come into play. The National Marine Fisheries says, no harvest on the Columbia so that a handful of fish might get back to the Snake, where there is slim chance they will survive in the warm, slow-moving water.

The Columbia River Compact, which sets seasons on the Columbia, cannot function properly under these conditions. In earlier years, harvest was allowed on those runs that were large enough for some harvest as long as the catch of fish which needed protecting had a catch of less than ten percent of the run.



**A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS** — But a graph depicting the rise and fall of Columbia River commercial salmon and steelhead landings since 1940 tells a grim story. (In millions of pounds.)

This was done by timing, and area, of fishing seasons, as well as regulating the type of gear that could be used. By taking this type of management away from the Compact, the result, in most cases, is overescapement of some runs, and a very small chance of building runs that have been destroyed to the point that is almost beyond recovery.

Fishermen at this time have nowhere to turn, except to apply for the Disaster Relief funds being supplied by the govern-

ment. Many fishermen need help right away. We are afraid the money will go to the wrong place, and not to the fishermen where the money was intended to go.

Younger fishermen would like to get some help and stick with the fisheries for awhile, hoping for the fish runs to improve. The older fishermen would rather go for a full buy-back program if enough money would be available.

—Jack Marincovich



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## Help

profitable year since 1988.

The money comes at a time when fishermen up and down the Pacific coast really need it most. The continuing, lingering effects of the warm ocean current called El Nino has been blamed by the declaration as the chief culprit for the almost complete closure of the commercial salmon season off Oregon and Washington this summer.

"It's turned the Pacific and the Columbia into virtual hot tubs," said one Oregon fishermen. "And fish don't like warm water."

Traditional unemployment benefits are not normally available to independent commercial fishermen, as they are considered self-employed, but this disaster declaration by President Clinton makes an exception.

"Our goal was to get benefits out to people as fast as possible," said Mac Prichard, an employment department spokesperson. "And to get benefits out to as many eligible people as possible."

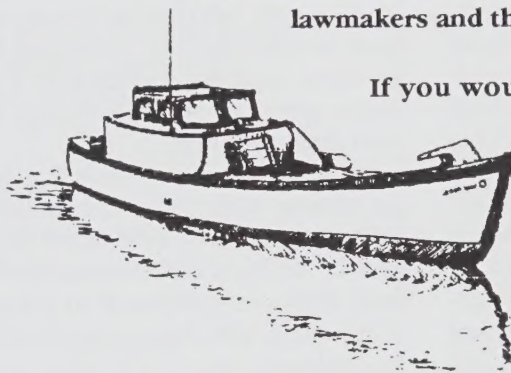
Benefits were payable retroactively from May 1, 1994. Fishermen are eligible for up to 26 weeks of benefits, while crew members are eligible for regular unemployment benefits in many cases, Prichard said.

Benefits were available only to those persons unemployed because of the salmon fishery closure, not to other unemployed workers with existing claims.

## Support your Union and the Columbia River Gillnetter!

The Columbia River Fishermen's Union would like to remind Lower Columbia commercial fishermen that we depend solely upon annual membership dues and individual donations to keep us afloat and in touch with the many important issues facing the commercial fishing industry today.

The *Columbia River Gillnetter* is the only remaining publication on the west coast devoted exclusively to gillnetting. We have been making a difference for more than 26 years, but our continued existence is threatened by increasing production and mailing costs. Now more than ever, we need a voice to represent our side of the issue, and the *Gillnetter* is our only contact with fishermen, lawmakers and the general public.



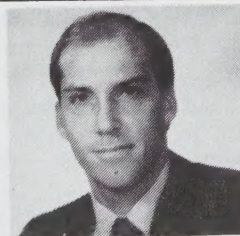
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ART DIRECTOR Michael V. Demase

GRAPHICS/PRODUCTION Tom Wynn

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Articles, letters and photographs are welcome for submission.



## YOUNGS BAY FISHERIES: *An historical perspective*



Commercial salmon fishing on Youngs Bay existed from the early 1900s until 1931. The bay was reopened to salmon fishing in 1962 to permit the harvest of coho salmon destined for the Klaskanine Hatchery.

During 1962-76 the bay opened to salmon fishing concurrently with the main-stem Columbia, late fall gillnet season in early September.

Beginning in 1976, ODFW and the Clatsop County Economic Development Council Fisheries Project began releasing fall chinook and chum salmon into Youngs Bay to supplement coho released by the ODFW and boost the local economy. Since 1977, the Youngs Bay season has been separate from the main-stem season.

Tule fall chinook (since 1989) and chum (since 1985) programs have been terminated in favor of a promising net pen acclimation program with an emphasis on early stock coho and early Rogue River fall chinook.

In the last several years this fishery has been of increased importance, not only because of its contribution to the local economy, but also because it provides a terminal area to harvest surpluses that do not mix with depressed stocks. All returning chinook and most coho are surplus to hatchery needs. Coho escapement past the fishery has been adequate to supply spawners to Klaskanine Hatchery.

In 1994 efforts will be taken to maximize hatchery escapement basin-wide. Since returning coho from the net pen program do not return to a hatchery, the objective of the 1994 Youngs Bay fall

**The last several years this fishery has been of increased importance, not only because of its contribution to the local economy, but also because it provides a terminal area to harvest surpluses that do not mix with depressed stocks.**

salmon season was to optimize harvest of returning coho from the net pen program while minimizing the catch of coho destined for the hatcheries on the north and south fork of the Klaskanine.

Fall chinook releases into Youngs Bay were of two stocks: lower river tules and Rogue River brights from experimental releases of 250,000 per year from CEDC facilities. No fall chinook releases were made in 1991 and 1993. Returning coho are early stock from releases of 1 to 5 million per year. No chum releases have been made since 1985.

Coho releases into Youngs Bay are at an all-time high with 4.19 million in 1991, 4.1 million in 1992 and 5.06 million in 1993. CEDC releases in 1993 have dramatically increased to a total of 4.21 million, with the majority (3.47 million) released from the Tide Point net pen site. Increases in recent years are a result of research funded by Bonneville Power Administration to help develop terminal fisheries opportunities.

Both coho and chinook begin entering the bay in mid-August, with peak abun-

dance in early September for chinook and mid- to late September for coho. The 1993 season opened on August 22 and remained open through Halloween night, a total of 70 days.

The Youngs Bay chinook catch of 365 fish was the lowest since 1979, while about 15,500 coho were landed in 1993.

This year, bay gillnetters caught more than 62,000 coho during the season, which ran from the end of August until Halloween night, with various closures in between. Some 18,000 were landed during the first 24 hours.

Jim Hill, head of the Youngs Bay net pen project, is optimistic yet cautious about the size of the '94 run. "If we get back 60,000, that's only a one-percent return. And you've got to factor that there are really no fisheries intercepting these fish before they show up in Youngs Bay," he adds.

Nonetheless, the economic impact on Clatsop County from this secondary fishery has been very positive. Pat Frazier of ODFW says this year's silver run was a nice surprise, as just 16,000 coho had been predicted to return, less than the actual first day's total catch.

Fishermen received between \$1.25 and \$1.35 per pound for their coho during the first part of the season, but saw prices fall rapidly to 80 cents later on. Chinook prices were in the same range.

Many local fishermen don't participate in the "mud puddle" bay fishery, but Hill says the world is changing, and fishermen must adapt. "There are things happening even the oldtimers haven't seen before," he says.

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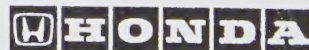
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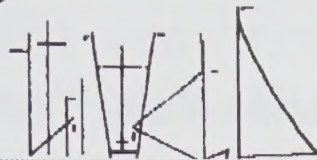




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### TRAGEDY AT SEA: *Five locals missing after crabber sinks in a wild Alaska storm*

Traveling from Westport, Wash. to Dutch Harbor, Alaska with a full load of crab gear, the *Fierce Competitor*, a 95-foot Warrenton-based crabber, ran into a wild Alaska storm and has not been heard from since early Wednesday, October 26.

Coast Guard planes from station Kodiak spotted an activated EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon) belonging to the *Fierce Competitor* just before 4 a.m.

Wednesday, and immediately began an extensive 5,000-square-mile search of the area.

Later that day an empty, deflated liferaft was spotted about 50 miles from the EPIRB signal by a Coast Guard spotter plane some 400 miles east of Kodiak, but it could not be reached because of bad weather. Reported winds of up to 60 mph with limited visibility and 30-foot seas severely hampered search efforts for the liferaft and the vessel.

Aboard the Warrenton-based *Fierce Competitor* were Robbie Simonson and wife Vickie, Keith Young, Larry Jones and Gordon Young, according to Petty Officer Randy Midgett at Coast Guard Station Juneau.

The fishing vessel *Royal Quarry* was traveling with the *Fierce Competitor* to Dutch Harbor some distance ahead, and also assisted in the search.

The *Competitor*, a converted steel oil rig, served as a tender during this year's Bristol Bay red salmon season in Alaska. It is owned by Dennis Sturgell of Warrenton.

*Mike Keyser's*

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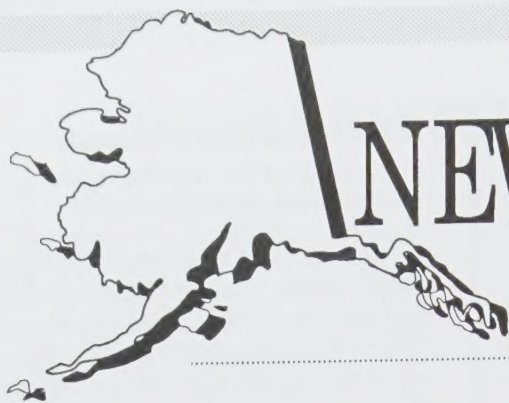
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# NEWS from the NORTH

## BRISTOL BAY '94: The word is, "retroactive!"

Bristol Bay gillnetters got some unexpected surprises this year: a late run, a much smaller than predicted red harvest and a better than expected fish price.

Last season, salmon came unusually early to the bay, catching many fishermen with their boat still on the dock. But this year, the fish were running about a week late, and it wasn't unusual for fishermen to pull a "skunk" on the fourth of July, the traditional peak of the run.

Bay fishermen reeled in more than 31 million wild reds this season from a total bay-wide run of about 45 million, significantly less than the 50-60 million fish which had been expected.

"After listening to months of poor fish price promises from major buyers, it's amazing just how fast the price can go up in just a few hours," said one bay gillnetter from Seattle.

Fish price was the biggest sticking point for bay fishermen this year, as most buyers started the season with a posted price of just 50 cents a pound. But when it became clear that the 60-million-plus prediction was well short of the mark, and more and more cash buyers with un-

**"After listening to months of poor fish price promises from major buyers, it's amazing how fast the price can go up in just a few hours."**

filled fish quotas started to sneak into the bay, the price paid to fishermen went up—fast.

Most major processors upped the ante to 65 cents a pound at mid-season and, in a rare move, made it *retroactive* to the first delivery of the year.

Just a few hours later, the price for the rest of the season rose to 80 cents and higher, with some enticing cash buyers offering over \$1 a pound to fishermen, also retroactive.

The Naknek/Kvichak district, always a main bay producer, was the real hot spot this year, as gillnetters here landed some 15 million fish, nearly twice the number caught in 1993. After last year's escapement goal was barely met, the Kvichak section had a strong return this year, while the Naknek River struggled to meet

its 1 million escapement goal. The poor showing in the Naknek spurred Kvichak-only openings, the first since 1979.

The wild Egegik district was a bit quieter this year, with a catch of only about 10 million fish, down significantly from the record 22 million caught here in 1993. Fish & Game restructured the timing of Egegik openings this year, closing the periods before the strongest part of the ebb to decrease intercepted Naknek/Kvichak-bound fish.

Nushagak district fishermen, who saw an unexpectedly strong return of kings this season, netted some 3.3 million reds as well. Last year, gillnetters here landed some 5.4 million reds, nearly double the number caught in 1992.

The Ugashik district tallied a red catch of about 3.5 million this summer, while Togiak fishermen reeled in about 170,000.

Next year will see the peak year of a five-year cycle, but fish biologists aren't picking a number just yet. A record 40 million wild red salmon were caught by Bristol Bay gillnetters in 1993, surpassing the 37.3 million caught in 1983.

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## DAMS: Fish protection measures found sorely lacking

In our last issue, the *Columbia River Gillnetter* reported that fish protection measures at Columbia River hydroelectric dams were possibly doing more harm than good.

Now a study by the Oregon and Washington departments of fisheries confirms what we've been saying all along.

Preliminary results show protective screens at Columbia dams which are supposed to keep young fish from being sucked into the giant turbine pumps are ineffective and not doing their job, while others are not there at all.

For years, commercial, sport and Indian fishermen alike have condemned the huge damage these pumps do to migrating young fish. It's especially frustrating when the expensive screens that *are* put in place are ineffective and useless.

A professional diving company recently hired to check screens on the Oregon side of the Columbia River found defective, inadequate or missing pump screens at more than 60 percent of dam locations, says company president Melvin Ray. (Which is, by the way, the same percentage of noncompliance found in a survey done nearly 14 years ago in 1981, according to the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.

On the Washington side of the river, the state inspected about 80 screen sites between Bonneville Dam and the mouth of the Snake, as well as from the Snake mouth to the Idaho stateline, according to John Easterbrooks, manager of the fish screen program for the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.

***A check of screens designed to protect young fish finds 60 percent either missing or completely defective and inoperable***

He said half of the 80 sites had no screens at all, or had screens which were placed in the wrong location, damaged, clogged by debris or in need of major maintenance.

The pumps are used for a variety of purposes, including drawing irrigation and cattle water from the river. Others are part of hydroelectric facilities.

Both Oregon and Washington require that screens be in place and properly maintained on all pumps sucking water from the Columbia and its tributaries. The screens must be designed to keep small fish, traveling from their spawning beds to the Pacific, from perishing in the turbines.

However, this recent report is the first comprehensive assessment of compliance with those laws.

One of the worst examples of what can go wrong happened in 1992 when more than 44,000 juvenile fish were killed when they were sucked into an irrigation system in place on the Umatilla River. *A criminal citation against an irrigation district manager was dismissed because it was not delivered by certified mail as required.*

But the Oregon state attorney general's office has filed a pending multi-million-

dollar lawsuit against West Extension Irrigation District for the loss of the thousands of fish.

Oregon State Police Sgt. Nick Cooke of Pendleton says a similar case is being investigated involving an unknown number of fish thought to have been killed at an hydroelectric dam on the lower Umatilla River last spring.

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## OPINIONS

Bruce Lovelin, Columbia River Alliance executive director, finds it sadly ironic that our region spends millions of dollars each year to save threatened salmon while at the same time allowing a commercial gillnet season.

He missed the point. The alliance's membership is made up of various entities that have profited from the damming of the Columbia River.

The dams have played a primary role in the destruction of the salmon runs.

The real irony is that the group that has benefited the most from the damming of the river has chosen to attack the commercial fishermen, who have had to watch their industry, which predates the dams, be destroyed.

We would not need to spend the millions had the dams not been built. Those who benefit should pay.

The dam operators and their customers have shot themselves in the foot and now want the gillnetters to bleed for them.

The favorable public response to the misinformation campaign the director has waged is most likely the small group of metropolitan sportsfishermen, who see more for themselves if gillnetting is banned.

Unfortunately for them, if you follow the alliance's reasoning that gillnetting should be halted because of in-river harvest of survivors on their journey home, then wouldn't the in-river sports fishery be the alliance's next target?

That's irony.

—Jon McKnight, Lake Oswego

The April 1994 issue of *Rangelands*, a journal published by the Society of Range Management, presented some facts on public-lands ranchers that the public needs to know.

The authors found that only 2 percent of the nation's ranchers graze cattle on federal lands. In 1992, the Bureau of Land Management spent more on range management — \$89 million — than ranchers collected in profits from grazing BLM lands — \$77 million.

According to the authors, "not only is the grazing program deeply in the red, but millions of dollars could accrue to the taxpayers if the federal government paid ranchers not to graze on federal lands."

These facts are reported not by environmentalists, but in a pro-livestock journal by a range scientist with the Dept. of

Animal and Range Sciences in New Mexico and a natural-resource economist.

As if this is not cause for enough concern, ranchers in Oregon now claim they will fight to the end if they are forced to take measures to save salmon. So we are paying ranchers to graze our lands, but they are unwilling to save taxpayers' salmon.

When will the Marlboro man become responsible?

When will the stories about commercial fishermen losing their livelihoods gain the recognition they deserve?

When will we have to tell our children that the Northwest used to have salmon to fish but we just couldn't afford to save them?

—Candice Guth, Southeast Portland

The hastily conceived scheme to spill water over eight Columbia/Snake River dams to save imperiled Northwest salmon isn't working.

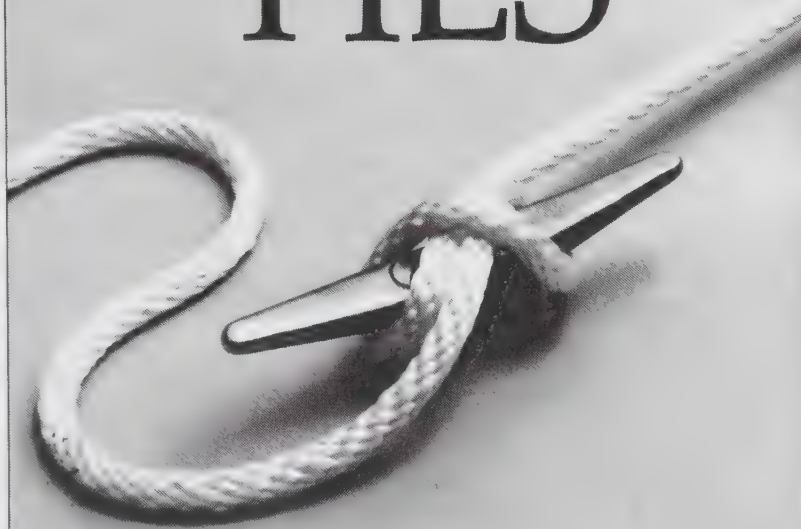
Fewer fish are dying in the dams' turbines, but no one can say for sure if the spills are killing more fish than they are saving. The monitoring so far reveals one undisputable fact: The spills are making most of the fish sick.

The National Marine Fisheries Service should be embarrassed. It bought into an ill-conceived plan, one cheered by many environmentalists, but one that is backfiring on the fish. The agency should stop the spill now before it does any more damage.

To do otherwise is madness.

—The Oregonian

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# Waves from the past

*The river seemed to be alive with boats. Hundreds were leaving from docks all along the Astoria waterfront, from Tongue Point to the port docks, heading out on the river.*

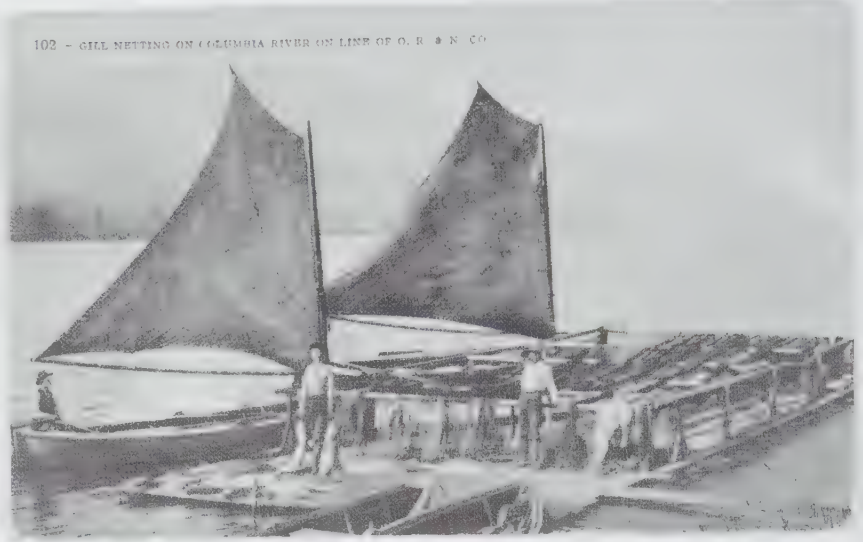
They were about 28 feet in length, double-end construction, painted green with a rounded foc'sle in the bow. A canvas cover extended aft from the foc'sle, supported by an 'A' frame which provided protection for the engine. A few were modified, instead with a cabin aft over the engine. Fewer still had square sterns at that time.

Strangers to Astoria who, at the time, were viewing this spectacular armada of small craft, asked the locals, "What in the world is going on?" A local resident might respond in surprise, "Why, don't you know, the salmon season opens at 12 noon today."

For the past several months, Astoria and small communities from Ilwaco upriver to Corbett were bustling with activity. New cork and lead-lines were stretched. Nets re-hung and mended. Gillnet boats were recaulked, repaired and painted. Cannery tenders and seine launches were being readied.

Canneries hiring crews, machinery overhauled, new fish boxes made, worn rope on fish boxes replaced, broken tender piles replaced at the docks. Delivery scows were towed to their summer anchorage to allow the gillnetter to deliver near his drift, rather than take the time to run to the cannery, and perhaps lose making high or low water.

The opening was an annual occurrence that had been repeated for many years, starting in the mid-1800s. Now, the gillnetter had an engine to take him to his fa-



vorite drift. In the early days, wind was required to fill his canvas sail, and it did not always cooperate. Sometimes a "Sou-west'r" would take its toll in lives lost.

May 1, 1929 was the day of this season opening, and at about 10:30 in the morning, I had a grandstand seat in Olga Moore's arithmetic class in the old Central Grade School between Irving and Jerome at 9th Street. Miss Moore was one of my favorite teachers. I had previously attended the old Alderbrook school, on what is now Leif Erickson Drive and 50th Street.

Needless to say, my attention was not on numbers, but on the parade of boats on the river. I was looking forward to summer vacation, to spend my days with Grandpa Wicken tending his fish-trap at McGowan. More about that later, after school lets out and I take passage on Fritz Elfving's ferry *Tourist No. 2* to Point El-

lice, for my summer with Grandpa. (Incidentally, I served as deckhand the summer of 1939 on the *Tourist No. 2*.)

Astoria could well have been called the chinook salmon capital of the world. Canneries furnished jobs for many Astorians. Although there were now fewer canneries operating, the waterfront still boasted a fair number.

One of the reasons for the decline in numbers was the consolidation of about five or six into what became the Columbia River Packers Association. When one spoke of CRPA, the term "Combine" was used by the old-timers. By the time Bumble Bee took over, the term was pretty much forgotten. As a youth, I still used the term. CRPA had a cold storage plant at the foot of 40th Street, just east of the east end mooring basin. It is still processing seafood, but with new owners.

Upstream from the old Astoria Plywood Mill was the Booth Cannery.

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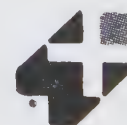
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Next, downstream at the foot of 4th Street was the Columbia River Salmon Company, owned and operated by Art Anderson. One usually referred to it as "Anderson's." Most of his fish came from cash scows. Henry "Nig" Larson ran a cash scow for him at Megler for several seasons.

The Elmore Cannery was next, and was the flagship of CRPA's Columbia River canneries. They had a second cannery at Ellsworth, Wash., about midway between Camas and Vancouver. Tom Sandoz, of the pioneer fishing family of

Astoria was superintendent. I have just a slight recollection of the Tallant & Grant Cannery below Elmore. This too was about at the end of its operation.

Next we had Union Fishermen's Co-operative, famous for its world-famous top brand canned salmon "Gillnetter's Best." It was one of the last to go.

Barbey Packing was located on the east side of pier 1. One of the last survivors. Most have fallen to fire or the wrecking ball. Some turned to tuna for survival, but that too gave out.

Pt. Adams Packing Company, located

at Hammond, is still operating by processing crab, shrimp and bottomfish. It's the only original Oregon salmon cannery which still operates, under new owners.

At Chinook, Wash., we had Chinook Packing Company, owned by Albion Gile. Fish-traps were the main source of supply. The cannery still operates on crab and shrimp under new owners.

P.J. McGowan & Sons operated a cannery at Ilwaco for many years. It has been long gone. McGowan also had a cannery at Warrendale, below Bonneville Dam. Fish wheels were the main source of supply for this area. They went out in 1934.

Altoona Packing Co. was located upriver at Altoona, Wash. In later years CRPA took over. Klevenhusen had a cold storage nearby. Upstream a few miles was Pillar Rock Packing.

Another few miles brought one to Brookfield, around the corner from Jim Crow Point, where Brookfield Packing had a cannery. It was destroyed by fire in 1931. I have a few memories of this cannery, Jim Redden was manager, and a friend of my dad's. One Sunday my folks and I were invited to have dinner with Jim and his wife, a teacher at the Brookfield School.

Jim came over in a gillnet boat, coming up Woody Island slough past Trondson Island to Aldrich Point. The present slough, which meanders in through the fields of Brownsmead, was open to the Columbia at that time. Its mouth entrance was where the present boat ramp is located. In later years the mouth was filled in, closing off any boat traffic. I don't recall how far Jim came in to pick us up.

Little did I realize that over 65 years later I would be launching my duck skiff at Aldrich Point, hunting the area from a float-house in Woody Island slough.

*Continued on next page*

## Advanced fish research grows 'em big

SEATTLE — A Canadian researcher who is refining ways to make salmon grow faster in the laboratory says fish farmers could one day get hooked on the technique.

At Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans in West Vancouver, the growth hormone gene is isolated from sockeye salmon, then fused with a genetic promoter to make the gene overactive.

The genetic material was injected into more than 3,000 coho salmon eggs in the laboratory, and, one year later, the fish hatched from the injected eggs were 11

times heavier than normal coho.

But like the serious concern and debate over the use of growth hormones to stimulate milk production in cows, it will be up to the fish-buying public to decide whether genetically-engineered salmon ever make it to the dinner table.

And even the producers of these quick-growing fish say the quality cannot approach wild species. "It would be a bit arrogant of us at this point to think we could improve on the salmon out there," said Robert Devlin at the Canadian fisheries department.



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The Tarabochia families of Astoria are descendents of the original families that settled and fished at Brookfield for many years. My dad used to talk about Dominic, who would give him a prime chinook on occasion. I suspect his great-grandsons are fishermen.

Altoona and Pillar Rock still have some of the original buildings and docks. A few fishermen and retirees still live there. Not a trace of Brookfield remains to mark what was once a thriving small year-round community.

These communities were, for most of their lives, isolated from the outside. Their only means of contact with the rest of the area was by scheduled riverboat, or their own gillnet boat.

This was a way of life built around fishing for a livelihood. It was a happy and satisfying experience, despite its relative isolation. It is now gone and only for those to read about in history books. A sad passing for those still around who remember or were part of it.

Can you visualize the confusion if all the CRPA gillnetters arrived at Elmore Cannery every morning to deliver? It would be chaotic. So, what did the canneries do? They established receiving stations and netracks at various locations along the river to make a more efficient and convenient system to accommodate the fishermen for his deliveries.

CRPA's Scandinavian Station was located in Alderbrook at the foot of 50th Street. In addition to the receiving station, netracks, bunkhouse, moorages and a large warehouse were provided. Covered space gave the fishermen a place to store and maintain his nets for the winter.

The net room was a favorite meeting place to socialize while working on nets during the winter. If you happen to look out and see the "Hog Buoy" with rain pelting down and a Sou-West'r kicking

*This was a way of life built around fishing for a livelihood. It was a happy and satisfying experience. It is now gone and only for those to read about in history books.*

up a good swell on the ebb, you were glad to be inside, patching that hole from the last snag you hooked. It would be a bit lumpy out there today.

CRPA's boatyard was also a part of this station. All the seine and smaller pickup launches were hauled out onto the ways during the winter. CRPA had an excellent maintenance program, and their boats were kept in first-class condition. One launch, the *Leader*, was built in this yard about 1917.

Johan Peterson, a cousin of my dad, was superintendent for many years. He

also hunted ducks on Russian Island. His "Loading box" which held shells, a thermos and lunch is now in my possession. I still use it.

Oar power was all we had in those days when I first started to hunt about 1933, in double-ended wood skiffs.

Mr. Sharon Turner, a longtime employee, was in charge of all stations and pickup launches. A solemn and loyal employee was he. I can remember him covering them everyday. When he retired, Frank Hoagland, another old-timer, took over.

Working our way downriver, Union Fish had netracks and a warehouse. At the foot of 46th Street, Chinook Packing had a receiving station with moorage, netracks and warehouse. Sam Christensen managed and lived near 45th & Bond Street, now Leif Erickson Drive.

Don Riswick, editor of the *Columbia River Gillnetter*, lived on 45th. About this time he was boat-pulling at Chinook at the ripe old age of 14.

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The Cold Storage, also known as Hanthorne's in the earlier years, came next. It reportedly was the largest of its kind. Two old-timers there were Tony Canessa, Superintendent, and Bill Catrall, Engineer. As a boy I sometimes wandered into the boiler room. Of particular fascination was the compressor, powered by an electric motor driving the huge fly-wheel by means of a wide belt. I had never before seen a mechanical device of what seemed of huge proportion.

Let's move down the river a bit to Occident station, out from the Desdemona Club on Leif Erickson Drive. This was a CRPA station. Union Fish had a station nearby.

Most of the canneries would moor receiving scow at various points along the lower river, at Jetty Sands below Hammond, Sand Island, Pt. Ellice, Megler and Hungry Harbor. Altoona Packing had a dock at Megler. CRPA had a dock and a few netracks at Ilwaco and North Shore. Frank Flegler, manager at the latter, lived ashore. A few pilings still visible mark the spot as one drives along the highway upstream from Megler.

Another station was Cotlardi near Altoona, one of the oldest fishing communities on the lower river.

Clifton was probably one of the largest CRPA stations. Bill Thompson was in charge for a number of years in the 1930s. A sizeable community of fishermen lived there year-round, so all the necessary facilities were provided. A few fishermen remain to maintain what's left. Most live elsewhere. Another sad remnant of that once great Columbia River chinook fishery.

My association with the industry was mostly in the Alderbrook area, so names I mention were fishermen from Scandinavian and Chinook stations.

Fishing out of Scandinavian were Ben Swanson, Axel Silverberg, Chris Stanich, John Prepula, Bob Larson, Alfred and Magnus Sorenson, Floyd, Carl and Vernon Forsberg, Herbert Wahl, Herman Mattison, Antone Stanich, Robert Prepula, Gus Milde, Eino Jarvinen, Sari Ivanoff, George Crandall, John, Herman and Alfred North and Tom Whitten.

Union Fish next door had Carl Moberg and Antone Sorensen, both community leaders. Carl, an executive of the union, became superintendent of Columbia Hospital. Antone, a director and manager of Union Fish, was a city councilman.

Among those fishing for Chinook Packing at the foot of 46th Street were Antone Marincovich, with sons Paul and

The hold was filled with loose fish, with more piled on deck behind the cabin to the top of the bullworks and boxed fish forward of the wheelhouse. She was loaded down to the guards.

Sam; Stuart Coe, Ole Berg, Hugo, Carl and Helmer Lindstrom. Don Riswick eventually acquired some "savvy" as a boat-puller at this station, and later became master of his own boats. His last, the recently-restored "Shoo-Fly," was featured in the August '93 issue of the *Gillnetter*.

Tons of salmon were picked up daily from scows, seining grounds and receiving stations by cannery tenders. These were vessels of 45 to 65 feet in length, with a capacity of up to 35 ton. A large hold forward with hatch covers allowed loose or boxed fish to be stored below-decks with additional boxed fish on deck. During the peak of the run, loose fish would be carried in the hold.

I crewed on the *Astor* for several seasons for my Uncle August. One fall we

picked up fish from Kaboth Sands below Woody Island. The hold was filled with loose fish, with more piled on deck behind the cabin to the top of the bullworks and boxed fish forward of the wheelhouse. She was loaded to the guards.

CRPA's fleet was made up of the *Astor*, *Leader*, *St. Helens*, *CRPA*, *CRPA II*, *Molly Lou*, *Unga*, *Golden Age* and *Diehless*. Surprisingly, the *Diehless*, a 63-footer built for CRPA at Astoria in 1916 and powered by a 45-horsepower semi-diesel, is still used as a fish buyer, with her name restored. For awhile, she chartered sport fishermen under the name of *Bay Belle*, under Capt. Bohman.

Union Fish had the *Independence I & II*, and the *Globe*. Art Anderson had the *C.H. Foster*, a double-end hull similar to the troller design. Pickup boat for Booth Fisheries was the *A. Booth*. Capt. Ramvick ran her. A typical design of early pickup launches, she had a trim hull, sharp bow and narrow beam. She was built by John Riswick, Don's grandfather and veteran boat builder, whose shop was near 42nd Street and Leif Erickson. A corner of his boat shed was cut off when the street was improved in the 1920s.

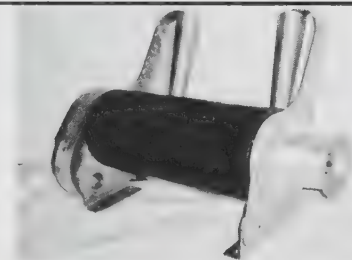
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## A glimpse back in time

*A rare old photograph depicts three women trying their luck  
hook-and-line fishing downtown Astoria in the early 1900s.  
Note the wooden streets and the bare hillside.*

*(Courtesy Compleat Photographer.)*

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# Tales from the Fishermen's Wives

Remembering twenty years of fond memories, old friends and a special group of women

*August 25th was a date significant in days gone by as the end of summer gill-net fishing.*

A date doubly bittersweet this year, for shortly after Arlene Graham called about writing this article, Harriet Engblom, Dawn Fowler and I began to sort equipment and supplies used by the Northwest Fishermen's Wives Association in the programs that for nearly 20 years we had presented to churches, clubs, businesses and anyone else who would listen.

Who could have foreseen that a meeting called in the summer of 1975 to plan a way to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Columbia River Fishermen's Protective Union would lead to almost two decades of fisheries activity?

From the beginning, at the suggestion of Jim Bergeron, Marine Extension Agent, we stressed the need to include women of all fisheries. While this did not meet with total approval of all fishermen, I felt it was one of our strongest ties to each other and to the fishing community as a whole.

One of our first projects was to publish a seafood cookbook, "Strictly Fish," now in its third printing and only 2,000 to go—we're sure at least 13,000 cooks are enjoying our efforts!

Those responsible for editing, advertising and many of the other chores that went into that book were Linda Tosti, Irene Martin, Esther Svensen, Olive Rodal, Ann Crisp and Kayrene Gilbertsen, all from the Puget Island/Cathlamet area. With the assistance of many others too numerous to mention by name, the reci-

pes came from a treasure trove we hadn't realized existed. Choosing the ones to print was hard to do!

We drew our membership from both Oregon and Washington, as well as the area near Longview to the Pacific. We are, I think, justifiably proud of the fact that in all of the programs we did, we made no charge except for actual expenses. As our children grew, many came to help us, and in return, we have been able to give a small annual scholarship to a fisherman's child who planned to go to college.

The memory of our "End of Harvest" Christmas parties we gave for the fishermen and the good fun we had doing them stays with us still.

We appreciated the wholehearted support we received from the area's processors and fishermen in supplying the products we needed and we supported them in return.

We traveled widely in both states to do booths at state and county fairs, seafood demonstrations and educational programs in schools. Twenty-six of us went to

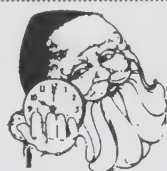
Washington to "talk fish" to Congress.

We printed and circulated a paper of support that recognized the importance of the commercial fishing industry to both states, and the Lower Columbia area in particular. In less than one month we had over 10,000 signatures which we presented to the fishery agencies at a Compact meeting.

We helped organize and served on the board of directors of the Pacific Coast Fishermen's Wives Coalition, with fifteen ports in Oregon, Washington, California, Alaska and British Columbia; the West Coast Fisheries Development Foundation; the Columbia River Basin Fisheries Alliance, which had representatives from Indians, commercial and sportfishermen, packers and guides. We also supported the proposed seafood center to be built in Astoria.

Seventy-nine members of the Pacific Coast Fishermen's Wives spent a week at OSU cramming a term of seafood merchandising into seven days. Harriet Engblom, Dawn Fowler, Connie Westerholm

*Please turn to Page 24*



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## SIGNS OF THE TIMES: Unions in trouble

### ON STRIKE

Thousands of picket signs are walking the sidewalks here in the Northwest and across the country, as the percentage of the private work force that belongs to unions steadily shrinks.

Hundreds of thousands of people are being affected by on-going labor disputes as lengthy, bitter and sometimes violent strikes become more and more common.

At the same time, public employees are increasingly joining organized labor. This has union leaders who don't believe that labor organizations can thrive if they're concentrated in the public sector concerned.

"The more isolated we are, the more exception to the norm, the more vulnerable we are," said Tim Nesbitt of the Oregon Public Employees Union. "So, obviously it is a concern if most [private] workers are unorganized."

Oregon was once one of the most unionized states in the country. In 1953, some 44 percent of the state's workers belonged to unions. Virtually all of organized labor was in the private sector, especially the timber industry.

But by 1982, the last year for which state statistics are available, about 25 percent of Oregon's private sector

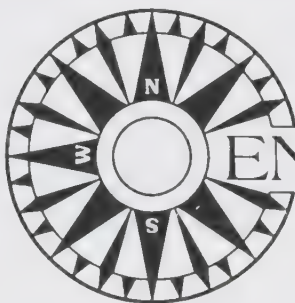
workers belonged to unions, compared to 35 percent of government workers.

Since then, labor experts estimate that current private union membership in Oregon has dropped closer to the national average of 11 percent. At the same time, more than half of Oregon's 180,000 state, local and education workers are organized.

While unions remain strong in the government sector, they are taking it on the chin in the private domain. The move from industrial to service jobs has hurt union membership hard, as has international competition and changes in labor laws which have made it easier for employers to oust unions.

Meanwhile, at presstime, the more than 7,000 grocery checkers and meatcutters striking Portland-area Fred Meyer stores have apparently reached a settlement, according to Jill Eiland, spokesperson for the management bargaining group.

The new contract agreement ends a bitter, sometimes violent dispute which ended up being counted in months rather than days.



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## Sea lions & salmon: tough choices for survival

**Marine officials have had enough of the pesky mammals and are fighting back**

SEATTLE — Those cute and loveable sea lions can no longer munch away on endangered steelhead at Ballard Locks uncumbered.

By an act of Congress, sea lions can now get the death penalty for eating threatened salmon or steelhead, for preying on fish runs believed to be approaching that status, or — in a special exemption to the Marine Mammal Protection Act won by Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Wash. — for preying on those fish migrating through the Ballard Locks.

Washington state wildlife officials have recently applied for, and will probably get, a petition to Commerce Secretary Ron Brown for permission to kill certain protected California sea lions who are repeatedly caught feasting on winter-run Cedar River steelhead on the verge of extinction.

Last April, Congress renewed the law which protects all marine mammals since

1972, granting for the first time a new authority to the commerce secretary to grant petitions for the lethal removal of identifiable animals interfering with the recovery of salmon and steelhead.

In 1993, less than 200 of the fish made it back to spawn here, and officials blame mammals like "Kevin," a 1000-pound California sea lion with a voracious appetite for fish. He's already been trucked out of the area to the Channel Islands off of Santa Barbara, California twice, only to swim the more than 1000 nautical miles back to Ballard.

"He's such a beautiful animal," said Rich Severtson, special enforcement officer for the National Marine Fisheries Service. "But he's been caught and branded and moved twice, and I'm afraid if he comes back again it's three strikes and you're out."

Wildlife officials say the Ballard Locks situation is the only documented instance where relentless predation by a protected species is threatening the existence of another species.

"Even in the timber industry, you don't have spotted owls eating marbled murrelets," says Robert Pfeifer, state fisheries biologist. "Most people would agree that sea lions are not remotely close to being endangered. This is an all-encompassing law covering all marine mammals. To the degree that it's been rewritten with the nuisance animals provision, we now have more flexibility," he says.

As steelhead runs began declining in the 1980s, biologists tried to stop the sea lions with underwater cherry bombs, killer whale recordings, boat chases and barrier nets — all without success.

As their numbers expand, California sea lions and harbor seals have become an increasingly serious threat not only to threatened salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River system, but to the fishermen who catch them as well.

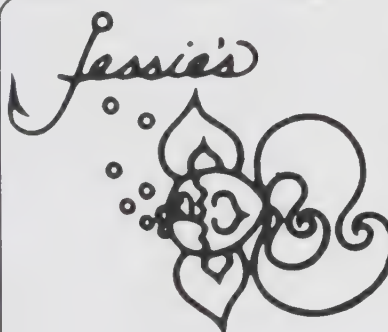
The mammal act now also allows the killing of marine mammals by commercial fishermen when valuable catches are threatened, as other deterrents used by fishermen have been unsuccessful.

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## HENRY E. RAMVICK

1917-1994

Astoria resident Henry E. Ramvick passed away May 7 in Astoria. He was 77.

Mr. Ramvick was born in Astoria April 10, 1917 to Haftor and Ellen Sunda Ramvick. He attended Astoria schools, and worked in Alaska before returning to the Astoria. He became a merchant marine, serving as first mate and later as captain, retiring in 1963.

He was awarded the Merchant Marine Emblem, Philippine Liberation Ribbon, Honorable Service Button, Pacific War Zone Bar, Victory Medal and a Distinction of Veterans status in 1991.

Mr. Ramvick then became a local commercial fisherman, retiring in 1992. He is survived by two sons, Brian and Monte Ramvick of Knappa; a daughter, Malia Newton of Aloha; a sister, Jennie Lerback of Seaside; close friend Georgia Maki of Astoria; twelve grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

## LOIS PUUSTINEN

1911-1994

Lois Jaynes Puustinen of Springfield passed away May 28, 1994. She was 82.

Mrs. Puustinen was born in Turon, Kansas on June 9, 1911 to Silas and Nettie Hanselman Jaynes. She graduated from Eugene High School and attended the University of Oregon, graduating at age 45. She married W. William Puustinen on March 19, 1932.

Mrs. Puustinen is survived by her husband; a daughter, Ina Puustinen-Westerholm; a sister, Myrtle Kennerly of Port Charlotte, Florida; grandsons Erick and Andy, as well as numerous cousins, nieces and nephews.

## GERALD W. PHILLIPS

1919-1993

Gerald Phillips passed away in a California hospital November 21, 1993. He was 74.

Born in Portland May 18, 1919 to Addison and Ethel May Davis Phillips, Mr. Phillips served in the Army during WWII.

A life-long commercial fisherman, he was co-owner of Westside Fish in Rainier and was a king crab fisherman in Alaska. A member of the Columbia River Fishermen's Union, he also fished the Columbia, Puget Sound, Grays Harbor and Willapa.

Mr. Phillips is survived by his wife, Elva; two sons, Gary Phillips of Vancouver and Brian Phillips of Louisville, KY; two daughters, Lynn Gildred of Santa Ynez and Jan Phillips of Ventura, Calif.; a brother, Don Phillips of Rainier; five grandchildren and one great-grandson.

## JAMES CLAIR TOTEFF

1925-1994

James Clair Toteff, 68, of Kalama, Wash., passed away in Portland Monday, May 16.

Mr. Toteff was born in Kalama on September 25, 1925, to Peter and Zenith Hill Toteff. He attended Kalama-area schools and graduated from Kalama High School in 1942. He married Theresa Hallin on August 31, 1946, in Portland. She survives at the family home in Kalama.

A lifelong commercial fisherman in Alaska and here on the Columbia River, Mr. Toteff loved to hunt in Eastern Oregon and Mexico, where he spent three months each year. Retiring in 1986, he will be remembered as a devoted husband, father and grandfather.

He was a member of the Columbia River Fishermen's Protective Union as well as the Kelso Elks club and the Kalama Masonic Lodge.

Mr. Toteff is also survived by two daughters, Beth Roberts of Bothell, Wash. and Sally Toteff-Rafferty of Olympia; a son, Jim Toteff Jr. of Kalama; a sister, June Vaughan of Milwaukie, and eight grandchildren. A sister, Bonnie Jean Haataja, and a granddaughter, Carmen Marie Toteff, died earlier.

## DONALD E. PHILLIPS

1921-1994

Life-long commercial fisherman Donald Earl Phillips passed away on a fish boat near Point Roberts, Wash., on August 4. He was 72.

Born in Mayger on October 4, 1921 to Addison and Ethel May Davis Phillips, Mr. Phillips had lived in the Rainier area since moving from Longview in 1970.

A commercial fisherman on the Columbia for many years, Mr. Phillips was a member of the Columbia River Fishermen's Protective Union, and also worked with Salmon for All and the American Cannery Association. He was a member of the Longview Elks club and the Cowlitz County Antique Car Club. He greatly enjoyed traveling to antique car shows and parades in the local area.

Mr. Phillips is survived by his wife, Maymie; two daughters, Carolyn Davis of Rainier and Donna Buckman of Astoria; a son, Jimmy Beckwith of Astoria; seven grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren.

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## NEW DEAL: Savage Rapids Dam goes, pumps will stay

ROGUE RIVER, Oregon — At the dismay of its owner, the Oregon Water Resources Commission voted last month to have the Savage Rapids hydroelectric dam removed to protect endangered salmon and steelhead runs on southern Oregon's Rogue River.

Commissioners struck a deal with the Grants Pass Irrigation District, which calls for the replacement of the dam within five years with giant irrigation pumps that would continue to provide the region's irrigators with a consistent supply of water.

Although environmental groups and commercial fishermen alike applaud the commission's decision as the right move, supporters of the dam, which provides a summertime reservoir for recreational boaters, are not as happy.

"Come hell or high water, they are just going to do what they want," says Ed Ramos, who purchased the reservoir park in 1989 for \$235,000, but has seen the value of his property take a significant drop. He now hopes he can get at least what he paid for it, not including the more than \$50,000 in improvements

he made to the property after he bought it five years ago.

But Oregon fish biologists are confident that the benefit of more salmon and steelhead making it back to their spawning grounds will more than outweigh the high and dry boaters in the Savage Rapids reservoir. Unlike the fish, boaters can go elsewhere.

Fisheries officials estimate that some 26,000 fish fail to make it past the Sav-

age Rapids each year, and that more than 115,000 additional salmon and steelhead would be produced in river and ocean fisheries if the dam was not in place.

"I know that 10 years ago the river bottom was black with fish," Ramos says. But he also claims the irrigation district was strong-armed by the resources commission into the agreement. He said they had to go along with it to get an extension on their water allocation permit.

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## If you can't beat 'em, join 'em

**Indians, fishing groups and environmentalists finally realize they're all in the same boat**

Northwest Indian tribes, environmentalists, sports and commercial fishing organizations have set aside their past differences to focus on a new common goal of saving salmon, rather than compete against each other for shrinking numbers of fish.

"We've started a brand new and historic dialogue," says Bob Eaton, director of Salmon for All, one of the groups forming the new alliance.

Disgusted with empty promises from the government, the groups said they were tired of sitting back and watching the fish decline, so they've come together to develop a recovery plan of their own.

"This wouldn't have happened a year ago, but we see an urgent need for action now," said Lorri Bodi, co-director of environmental group American Rivers. "If you start from the perspective of what's good for the fish, then the common ground on what to do is there."

The new alliance brings together a potentially influential combination of Indian treaty rights and the economic power of environmental and fishing groups that for years have been locking horns and getting nowhere.

Just two years ago, sportfishing groups banned together to try to stop gillnetting on the lower river through the initiative process. They were soundly defeated.

Now they've formed a new organization called the Northwest Sportfishing

Industry Association, which includes such giants as Fred Meyer and G.I. Joe's, and they're now working together with commercial fishing groups rather than against them.

"We formed to deliver a jobs and money message," said Liz Hamilton, director of the new sports group.

By combining their resources, the tribes, environmentalists and fishing groups hope to be a formidable foe to the Columbia River Alliance, a powerful group of industries and utilities which protect the power generated by Columbia River hydroelectric dams, known killers of huge amounts of salmon.

The CRA has been very reluctant to even consider removal of the dams, deeming it unnecessary, even though studies show more than three-fourths of returning fish are killed when attempting to negotiate dam turbines.

"Historically, the [Indian] tribes have been very patient," says Ted Strong, director of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, part of the new alliance.

"We've watched as the state and federal governments took their own actions, and I think the results are in. They've failed to accomplish the environmental standards guaranteed in treaties signed 100 years ago."

## MARINE MAMMAL UPDATE

Winter is pinniped season on the Columbia. Harbor seals, which spend the summer season in bays and estuaries, begin to chase smelt up the river. Male California sea lions leave southern California and head north to Oregon and Washington.

March is the peak month, with more than 4,000 seals in the lower Columbia feasting on seasonal smelt, their favorite meal.

Marine mammals are clear, intelligent opportunists, says Ron Schusterman, scientist at the University of California Santa Cruz who has studied the learning patterns of sea lions for years.

He says they are, in fact, smarter than most dogs. In the wild, they return to productive sites, learn to raid gillnets when the smelt runs subside and learn to answer the call of a fisherman's engine like a dinner bell.

"When there are fewer fish in the river, that just makes those caught in nets more attractive," says Bob Eaton of Salmon for All.

"Our guys feel like they're providing a seal and sea lion smorgasbord out there."

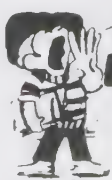
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## Judge removes cattle grazing ban

Splitting the difference between environmental and economic concerns in two Eastern Oregon national forests, a federal judge has chosen to protect dwindling salmon runs without crippling commercial activities in the forest.

U.S. District Judge Malcolm F. Marsh decided that cattle will be allowed to return to the Wallowa-Whieman and Umatilla national forests for limited grazing this winter, but stopped short of allowing further logging in areas under contract. Timber already cut under previous timber contracts may be removed from the forest, however.

Marsh also specified that the forest service must consult with federal fish biologists before allowing timber, range and roadbuilding projects in sensitive forest areas.

The October ruling lifts a grazing ban in place since August. "I think what the public wants is to change logging and grazing that is harmful but to let harmless activity proceed," says David Bayles of the Pacific Rivers Council, an environmental group which sued the U.S. Forest Service in an attempt to stop controversial logging and grazing in the Eastern Oregon forests.

"This decision does get us part of the way down that road," he said.

The Pacific Rivers group, joined by several other conservation organizations including sport and commercial fishing groups, argued that logging and cattle grazing damage fish spawning grounds by diverting dirt, silt and other debris into gravel stream beds, making the water too shallow for effective spawning.

"It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that it *does* do an awful lot of damage," said one group member.



## The race is on

*An old photograph shows motorboat races along the picturesque Astoria waterfront during one of the very first Astoria Regatta celebrations. Note the covered grandstand and sleek race craft which were specially built for river races. (Courtesy Compleat Photographer.)*



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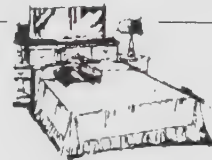
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### *Fishermen's Wives* .....

and I traded hats as officers of Northwest and Pacific Coast Fishermen's Wives.

Harriet served on the Pacific Fisheries Management Council salmon advisory sub-panel, and as an Oregon Advisor for the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. She also worked with Jim Bergeron and Jim Hill, from the Clatsop Economic Development Council Youngs Bay project.

Harriet also served on the Astoria Seafood Consumer Center board of directors, and held offices in both NW and Pacific Coast Fishermen's Wives.

Mildred Nicholas helped organize and served on the NW and Pacific Coast Fishermen's Wives associations, the Columbia River Fisheries Alliance and the West Coast Fisheries Development Foundation. She was appointed by Gov. Atiyeh to the '83-84 interim legislature's Fisheries Resource Task Force, represented PCFWC at a national limited entry conference and presented two televised statements against efforts to ban gillnetting.

Dawn Fowler held chairs and helped organize both NW and Pacific Coast Fishermen's Wives from the beginning.

Some activities of interest were those we did in schools for children of all ages. The questions they asked and the interest they showed in commercial fishing convinced me of the need to bring the fishing story to educators on all levels.

I also enjoyed the legislative "give and take," the preparing and presenting of papers before those who would foster the abolishment of gillnetting.

It was my good fortune to be at the Capitol when Sen. Charles Hanlon and Rep. Tom Hanlon first came to Salem. They both gave us tremendous support.

Of course Ted Bugas needed no briefing from me when he was a legislator, and I am also indebted to Les AuCoin, who always took the time to listen. It is largely due to his sponsorship that the Seafood Center will be built.

Space would not allow for all of the names of those who helped us along the way, but, without them, we could never have accomplished what we did.

Most of all I relied on the help and support of my late husband Ed Nicholas, who never objected to the time, money and effort spent on a cause he also believed in.

—Mildred L. Nicholas

## SNAG DIVING

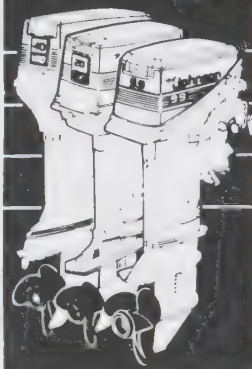
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## Effort underway to make coho, chinook gamefish

A broad-based coalition of anglers, sporting goods retailers, boat manufacturers and resort operators are busy drafting a future Washington state ballot measure which could make coho and chinook salmon gamefish in that state.

The announcement comes just weeks after sportfishing groups vowed to join forces together with Indian tribes, environmental groups and commercial fishermen to save the resource, rather than fight against each other over a dwindling number of available fish.

The gamefish efforts follow an unrelated September meeting of the Washington Wildlife Federation in which the federation supported making chinook and coho sport fish.

The proposed measure, surely not a popular one among commercial fishermen and other user groups, could be on

the Washington ballot as early as November 1995 if enough signatures can be gathered. It would ban non-tribal commercial fisheries in state waters.

"What next?" said one Columbia River gillnet fisherman of the proposed initiative. "They've already got the steelhead, now they want the coho and chinook, too. It's ridiculous."

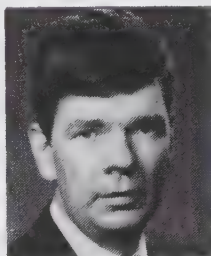
In Oregon, salmon are considered food fish, unless they are taken by hook and line, or are less than 15 inches in length. In either of these two cases, they are considered gamefish.

Tony Floor, spokesman for the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, said the department isn't likely to take a position on the issue, even though the initiative is being spearheaded by Jim McKillip, a retired enforcement officer for the department.

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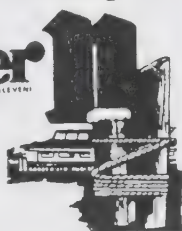
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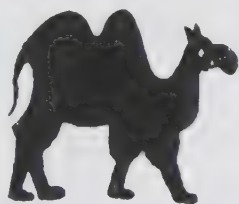
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## The scoop on Columbia River sockeye runs



Present-day Columbia River sockeye runs are a mere fraction of the historic populations of the late 1800s and early 1900s, when commercial landings twice exceeded **4.5 million** pounds, and annual catches commonly exceeded **1 million** pounds.

Beginning in the early 1900s through the 1970s, the construction of main-stem **dams** in the Columbia and Snake rivers and tributaries greatly reduced the accessible spawning and rearing areas available for sockeye. Originally, sockeye nursery lakes in the Columbia Basin contained a minimum of 222,850 surface acres. In the upper Columbia, the two major remaining stocks are the Lake Wenatchee and Lake Osoyoos. These two stocks utilize less than 4 percent of historic nursery lake habitat of the entire Columbia Basin. Present runs rely almost entirely on wild production.

Sockeye movement into lakes of the upper Salmon River was inhibited by Sunbeam Dam between 1913-34. Since passage was restored, the largest run to return was 4,300 sockeye at Redfish Lake in 1955.

Sockeye restoration efforts during the 1980s in Stanley Basin were not successful in improving run status. A sockeye run to Wallowa Lake, Oregon (in the Grande Ronde subbasin of the Snake River) was eliminated early in this century by an irrigation diversion and a control structure built in the lake outlet in 1916 to raise and stabilize the lake level. A self-sustaining population of kokanee currently persists in the lake and its tributaries.

The Snake River sockeye run has averaged fewer than **400** fish since 1962, based on the Ice Harbor Dam count. Since 1975 and the completion of the

lower Snake River hydroelectric system, the Snake River sockeye run has averaged fewer than **150** annually. Since 1985 the Ice Harbor Dam count has been fewer than 25 fish and reached a low of one fish in 1990. In 1993 a total of 17 sockeye were counted at Ice Harbor.

Sockeye adults migrate through the lower Columbia River during June and July, with average peak passage at Bonneville Dam about July 1. While a

considerable overlap in run timing occurs, the Wenatchee stock generally is timed earlier than the Okanogan stock. The difference in timing may be attributable to age structure differences with older fish returning earlier. The Wenatchee stock returns predominantly as age 4 and 5 fish, while the Okanogan stock returns as age 3 and 4 fish.

Since upriver-bound summer chinook have been in depressed status, regulations



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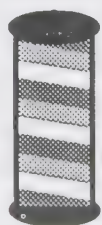
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for sockeye gillnet fishing have been designed to minimize the adult summer chinook handled. The 4-1/2" mesh restriction has effectively reduced the handling of adult chinook.

Commercial sockeye fishing occurs prior to the main migration period for up-river steelhead, which increase steadily after early July, and peak in late July/early August. Time, area, and mesh regulations assist in reducing the number of steelhead handled in the sockeye fishery, particularly below Bonneville Dam.

The Skamania summer steelhead hatchery stock returns primarily to lower river tributaries, with peak abundance in the main stem during June. The area between the Longview Bridge and the Sandy River mouth contains six tributary rivers. These rivers all have Skamania summer steelhead returns. The majority of the main-stem sport, summer steelhead fishery in this area is concentrated at several of the tributary mouths and 12 beaches. Commercial sockeye fishing has not occurred in this area since 1972.

During 1973-82 there were no commercial sockeye seasons due to depressed returns averaging only 54,300 fish. During the same period, escapement as meas-

ured at Priest Rapids Dam, averaged only 47,800 sockeye. Snake River escapement, as measured at the uppermost dam, averaged 219 sockeye during this period.

Beginning in 1983 with a 100,500 run size, 161,600 sockeye in 1984 and 200,400 in 1985, commercial fisheries were allowed. Notwithstanding a small run size of 59,900 in 1986 minor non-Indian and treaty Indian fisheries were set based on an harvestable pre-season run prediction. During 1987 and 1988 the run rebounded to 145,300 and nearly 100,000 sockeye (respectively) to again allow for significant commercial harvest.

The 1989 sockeye run of 47,400 and the 1990 run of 49,600 were the two poorest runs since the 1978 return of 18,400 sockeye. No commercial sockeye fisheries occurred in 1989 and 1990.

The sockeye run improved to 76,500 in 1991. No commercial fisheries were set because of an uncertain in-season estimation of fish available for harvest and the proposed listing of Snake River sockeye under the ESA. The Regional Salmon Program called for no commercial sockeye fishing, but allowed for treaty Indian fishing according to the guidelines in the Columbia River Fish Management Plan

(CRFMP). Nine sockeye were counted at Ice Harbor Dam in 1991.

In 1992 the sockeye run showed continued improvement. Even though the run of 85,000 sockeye was harvestable according to the CRFMP, no commercial seasons were set in zones 1-6 because of Snake River sockeye and the uncertainty in-season as to if a significant amount of fish were available for harvest. However, in 1992 an experimental commercial sockeye fishery by the Yakima Indians occurred upstream of the Snake River in Priest Rapids pool. About 900 sockeye were sold during this mid-July fishery.

The Ice Harbor Dam count recorded 33 sockeye in 1992, including some kokanee, based on reviewing videos of sockeye passing Lower Granite Dam. Estimates say that only two sockeye passed Ice Harbor Dam in 1992.

The 1993 pre-season expectation by the department was for a run of 80,000 to 100,000 sockeye. The actual 1993 sockeye run size of 84,200 was similar to the 85,000 sockeye in 1992.

As in 1992, no commercial seasons were set for zones 1-6 in 1993. Only 19 Snake River sockeye returned to the Columbia River.



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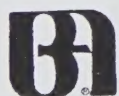
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## Waves from the past *continued*

Barbey Packing had the *Mayday*, Point Adams the *Chief* and later the *Papco*. On the Washington side, Chinook Packing had the *Man O'War*. She was built at the Klep Shipyard in Rainier, powered with a 75-horsepower Union diesel. The smaller launch *Gertrude*, handled the Chinook area fish.

Down at Ilwaco, McGowan & Sons operated the *Leonore* and *Bonseline*, both local pickups near Ilwaco.

Going upriver a bit, Altoona Packing had the *Altoona I & II*, and Klevenhusen the *Martha*. The latter was distinguished by an iron spoke wood handlegrip wheel, mounted on the forward (outside) wall of the rounded wheelhouse. Why? I never learned. Maybe it was cooler to steer from outside on a hot day.

Pillar Rock station had the *Harrington* and *W.B. Starr*.

The Alderbrook area boasted two boat yards that turned out many a fine crafted wood hull boat for the fishing industry.

The Lindstrom yard was on the beach inside the SP&S railroad trestle near the Chinook station. Old man Swede Lindstrom and his sons Ade, Hugo, Carl and Helmer turned out the top line of design and craftsmanship. One of their products was the yearly production of the larger size gillnet sailboats for the Bristol Bay fishery. They would be moored inside the trestle after launching to await transport north, usually on CRPA's freighter *Memnon*.

I should mention that Mel Hjorten trained here and eventually followed Ade as superintendent of CRPA's Youngs River shipyard.

The other yard was John Riswick's, a Norwegian who turned out some of the finest boats of the area. His Alaska boats would also be seen each spring, moored

inside the trestle above the cold storage.

Another builder with a crew of the best Finnish carpenters of the area was Matt Tolonen near Smith Point.

CRPA established a station at Newport in the late 1920s. The *CRPA II* was rebuilt with raised bullworks and hatches for better seaworthiness. A rear mast and beam was also added for the hold aft of the deckhouse. John Lindberg was skipper and his son "Red" decked for him.

The *Unga*, the largest of CRPA's fleet, also made the Astoria-Newport run. She was more of the typical Alaska size and design. Allen Hughes was skipper, and later was captain of the *Tourist II*, making the Astoria-Megler run during the summer peak. It was the 1939 season I decked on her.

Brothers Charlie and Fred Soderberg ran the *Diehless* and *CRPA*, tying up at Kinney's, at the foot of 9th Street. Bill Bergman tied up at George & Barker with the *Leader*, built around 1917 at Scandinavian yard. Ed "Edo" Elliot ran the *Golden Age*. August Nelson, my uncle, skippered the *Astor*. I decked several seasons for him, making runs to Ilwaco,

North Shore, Point Ellice, Megler and Clifton. One year we picked up fish at Chris Siverson's trap at Woody Island and Kaboth seining ground below. One fall we picked up fish at Corbett for the Ellsworth Cannery.

Dave Anderson, brother to Art Anderson, ran the *Mayday* for Barbey.

Union Fish's *Independence II* was skippered by Dave Reinikka. He made runs to their Wallace Island station at the mouth of Clatskanie slough, and as far as Rainier. Dave died in 1993 at the age of 82. I saw him several years ago at our annual duck hunter's dinner, I hadn't seen him for 45 years.

Capt. Polkinghorn was skipper on the *C.H. Foster* for Art Anderson's cannery. Down Ilwaco way we had Bunny Taylor running the *Leonore*. She didn't have a mast with a boom for loading. Up at Chinook, Gus Bergestein ran the *Man O'War*, a regular caller at their 46th Street station and upriver ports. A 75-horsepower Union pushed her along with the best.

Bill Heiner put in many years on the *Altoona II*, she had a gas engine with a



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wet exhaust, as did some early launches before diesel took over. On my first season on the *Astor*, she was powered by a Corliss gas engine, burning close to 10 gallons an hour. Gas was cheap in those days.

Seining grounds were big producers. Seines were eliminated in Washington in 1934, but were still legal in Oregon until the 1940s. CRPA, Barbey and McGowan fished Peacock Spit and Sand Island. Bosses there were Ernie Woodfield and Chesley "Moonlight" Smith. Welch Sands, below the present Astoria-Pt. Ellice bridge, was run by Ken Parker.

Upriver at Meehan Sands below Altoona on the Washington side of the ship channel, George Kruckman ran the show with wife Pauline and daughters Pat, June and Louise housekeeping and feeding the crew.

Jim Crow Sands for CRPA was overseen by Henry Pice, with floats and moorage on Horseshoe Island at the lower end of Woody Island slough. Oscar Hendrickson ran one of the seine tow launches. Downstream a few miles, Roscoe Miles ran the show on Kaboth Sands for CRPA.

Those grounds were all part of the "glory days" of what was felt to be an inexhaustible resource. There were a few people becoming concerned as warning signals were appearing. Unfortunately, the tide had turned and could not be held back. We are now reaping the results of being unable to properly regulate the effects of power, navigation, forest and agriculture interests on the river.

We began this story in my room in old Central school. Days have passed and we have shared some of the memories on the river, and finally summer vacation has arrived. It is May 25th and I am on

Those grounds were all part of the glory days of what was felt to be an inexhaustible resource. Unfortunately, the tide had turned and could not be held back.

my way to McGowan, across the river and downstream from the Astoria-Pt. Ellice bridge about a mile. A weatherbeaten church and a few houses are all that remain.

Grand-dad Chas Wicken immigrated from Finland, eventually ending up at McGowan tending fish traps for P.J. McGowan & sons about 1893. He saved enough money to purchase a home and a fish trap. The trap was issued government license #2530 in 1889. The location was about opposite the church in about 27 feet of water.

Fish traps were introduced to the area in Baker's Bay about 1879 by John Graham. By the turn of the century there were hundreds, mostly on the Washington shore from Ilwaco to Megler. A few were located upriver at Knappton, Cotlar-di, Woody Island, Cathlamet and Clifton. There could have been others.

Frans Munson of Chinook had traps at Woody Island, as did Chris Siverson. Most gillnetters know his son, George. Chris had what was one of the top traps on the river. There were several traps owned by CRPA and Stuart Davis of Chinook at the head of Sand Island that consistently made daily lifts of several ton during the peak in August.

Grand-dad's trap was average, but I'll never forget one August lift of 4400 pounds.

Fish traps were probably the most efficient means of harvest next to fish

wheels. Gillnets and seines were more labor-intensive.

There were five basic parts to a trap. Construction consisted of piling driven into the river bottom, with web (usually 4 to 5-inch mesh size) attached. The lead was a row of piling driven at about 8 foot intervals, in a straight line perpendicular to the shore or river current. Web hung on 3/4" line would be attached to the piling from a point about 2 feet above high water, extending to the bottom.

Rocks were attached to the bottom edge at about three- to four-foot intervals to weight the web to the bottom. A 3/4" line would be lashed to the bottom edge of the web between each pile, and run along the opposite side to keep the bottom from "floating" on a strong flood.

The function of the lead was to guide the fish into the heart, an opening of about 10-12" on both the upstream and downstream sides of the lead allowed fish to enter. The heart was essentially an enclosure which surrounded the fish once they entered from the outer end of the lead.

*To be concluded in the spring issue*

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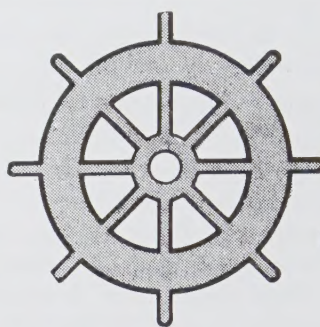
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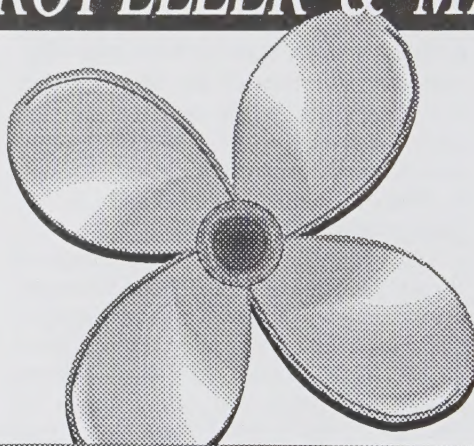
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